grave concern. The Munsiffs, as a rule, have not been able to cope with the increased burden, and the arrears, which numbered only 18,732 suits in 1090, have risen to 23,938 suits or by 27·8 per cent. The question as to how best the Village Panchayat Courts could be made to afford relief to the Munsiffs has been referred to the High Court.

PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

20. Agriculture.—Copies of the report of the Director of Agriculture for 1093 will, as usual, be placed in your hands, from which you will obtain detailed information regarding the working of the Agricultural Department during the year. From the analysis of the soils of Travancore conducted by the Department so far, it is seen that they are deficient in phosphoric acid and that it is, therefore, necessary to apply phosphatic manures to them. One of the most useful items of work in which the Department is engaged is the preparation and supply of manures to ryots at a cheap rate. With a view to meet the increasing demand on this account, four branch manure depots were opened in South Travancore in 1093, under the management of commission agents. The scheme has since been extended to other parts of South Travancore, and will, if successful, be further extended to the remaining parts of the State, so as to enable the Department to divest itself of the work of direct sale altogether. The supreme importance of the application of suitable manures to all kinds of soils, both wet and dry, in Travancore, can never be overestimated. The question of cultivating better varieties of paddy has also been engaging the attention of the Department, and during 1093, four seed unions were formed for the distribution of improved paddy seeds. The possibility of making *punja* cultivation near Alleppey annual, instead of biennial as at present, is stated to have been successfully demonstrated. There are not less than 20,000 acres of *punja* lands which are now cultivated only in alternate years and it would be a great advantage, if even a portion of this area could be made to yield an annual crop. The efforts of the Department in this direction will be watched with interest. The paramount necessity of extending the cultivation of edible food crops needs no advocacy, and I earnestly hope that the activities of the Department will be specially directed towards this end.

21. Agricultural statistics.—The importance of having full and accurate statistics in agricultural matters is self-evident. In July 1918, Mr. Findlay Shirras, Director of Statistics to the Government of India, paid a visit to Trivandrum and a conference was held with him for the discussion of questions relating to the statistics of tea and other agricultural products. Since the close of 1093, a further conference of the Peishkars, the Commissioner, Devicolam, and the Director of Agriculture has been held, as a result of which it was decided that detailed statistics should be collected in respect of paddy, cocoanut, tapioca, sugar-cane and rubber. The Land Revenue Department has been entrusted with the duty of collecting these statistics. The periodical compilation of accurate statistics would secure to Government valuable data for gauging the agricultural condition of the country from time to time, and the need for the closest scrutiny in seeing that the data collected correspond to actual facts has been brought home to the Department. A separate Statistical Section has also been opened in the General and Revenue Secretariat for the collection and compilation of statistics relating to agriculture and other matters of administrative importance.

22. Sericulture.—The Manager of the Trivandrum Silk Farm, who had been deputed to Pusa, Berhampur and Srinagar, to study the latest methods of sericulture, returned and submitted a report on the best means of developing the industry in Travancore. A scheme for the improvement of sericulture in the State has been sanctioned with effect from the beginning of 1094, under which the work in the Silk Farm at Trivandrum will be mainly experimental, while that in the Farms at Tiruvalla and Nedumangad, the latter of which has been newly opened, will be directed towards the extension of the cultivation of mulberry and the popularisation of the latest methods of silk-worm rearing in the villages. The staff of the sericultural branch of the Department has been substantially strengthened.

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